



# Data Points

CWHS

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

The risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer increases with age; about 18% of breast cancer diagnoses occur in women in their forties<sup>1</sup>, while 77% of new cases occur in women 50 years and older.<sup>2</sup> Women over 50 years also have the greatest risk of dying from breast cancer.<sup>3</sup>

One way to reduce the number of deaths due to breast cancer is to detect the disease at an early, more treatable stage. While mammography is not always 100% accurate, it is an effective early-stage screening method which can detect a cancer up to several years before it can be felt on examination. The American Cancer Society and the California Department of Health Services recommend that women 40 years and older be regularly screened for breast cancer by having a clinical breast exam and a mammogram once a year.

The 2000 California Women's Health Survey asked women if they ever had a mammogram, and how long it had been since they had their last mammogram. Respondents who had ever had a mammogram could answer that their last mammogram was within the past one, two, three, or five years, or over five years ago. The analysis is based on 2,067 women ages 40 and older who reported a household income. Women who reported being previously diagnosed with breast cancer (only 3% of women surveyed who reported a household income and who had a mammogram within the past year) were included. Low income is defined as hav-

ing a household income equal to or less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and higher income is defined as having a household income greater than 200% of the FPL.

- Income is less of a factor in getting a mammogram within the past year in women under 50 years compared to women 50 years and older. Across all age groups of women 50 years and older, a smaller proportion of low income women reported having a mammogram within the past year compared to higher income women.
- Although women with Medicare have annual mammography coverage<sup>4</sup>, only 58% of low income women age 65 and older reported having a mammogram within the past year, compared to 71% of higher income women (not presented in the graph).

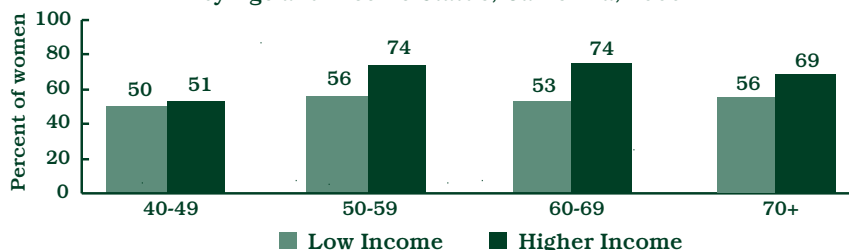
The California Department of Health Services is working to close the economic gap in mammography screening rates. Cancer Detection Section programs such as the Breast Cancer Early Detection Program (BCEDP) and Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provide breast cancer screening and diagnostic services to uninsured and underinsured women of low income.

## WOMEN AGES 40 AND ABOVE WHO HAD A MAMMOGRAM WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, BY AGE AND INCOME STATUS, CALIFORNIA, 2000

Cancer Detection Section,  
California Department of  
Health Services

**Public Health Message:**  
*Messages should emphasize the importance of regular breast cancer screening among women ages 40 and over with emphasis on those over 50 years. Outreach efforts should direct low income uninsured or underinsured women ages 40 and over to programs such as California Department of Health Services Breast Cancer Early Detection Program (BCEDP) and Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) to receive screening and diagnostic services.*

Women Ages 40 and Above Who Had a Mammogram Within the Past Year,  
by Age and Income Status, California, 2000



Low Income is defined as having a household income equal to or less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and Higher Income is defined as having a household income greater than 200% of the FPL.

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society, Mammography Guidelines for Asymptomatic Women. 2000. [www3.cancer.org/cancerinfo](http://www3.cancer.org/cancerinfo).

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society, Cancer Resource Center, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Fast Facts. [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Medicare and You, Your Medicare Benefits, 2000. Health Care Financing Administration. [www.hcfa.gov](http://www.hcfa.gov)